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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

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New York

President:	Mrs. Kazragienė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Shearman
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2014/105)

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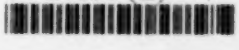

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2014/105)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Ramos-Horta, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Bissau.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil, to participate in this meeting in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/105, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ramos-Horta.

Mr. Ramos-Horta: Speaking here from Bissau, I would like to let the Council know that with me is my very loyal team — the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) family, who sustain the United Nations presence here. To my right is Mr. Gana Fofang, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative; to my left is my chief of staff; and, following the order from the left, are our head of administration, Guadalupe Sousa, head of the Human Rights Section, Antero Lopes, head of security sector reform and rule-of-law assistance, Martinho Chachiua, head of the Political Affairs Section, Linda de Souza, also from Political Affairs, Ruddy Flores, from Political Affairs, Musafiri Prosper, from the Strategic Planning Unit, and Raluca Eddon, from the Peacebuilding Support Office. Other staff who do not fit at the table are sitting behind us in the room. We all extend our warmest greetings to you, Madam President, and to members of the Security Council.

We wish to express our utmost satisfaction with and appreciation for the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/19) issued by the Council as a result of our interaction in November 2013. The report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2014/105) covers developments in Guinea-Bissau since my last briefing, on 26 November 2013 (see S/PV.7070). Now I would like to highlight some developments since the report was drafted.

On the political front, after much delay the largest party, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), held its national congress, from 2 to 11 February. Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, former Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure under former President Koumba Yalá and former Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, was elected leader with a majority of over 60 per cent of the votes. The candidate with the second highest number of votes, Braima Camará, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Guinea-Bissau, obtained 37 per cent of the votes.

Although the contest was bitterly fought, the defeated candidates graciously conceded. For his part, Mr. Simões Pereira called on his rivals to join him in promoting reconciliation and unity in the party. Mr. Simões Pereira's election offers real hope for a new generation of leaders to emerge and foster the required changes for the country. His election has generated a very positive mood across the nation. He faces a challenge to unite the party.

Nevertheless, there are still pending issues between Mr. Pereira, supported by his constituencies in the party, and the candidate with the second highest number of votes, Mr. Camará, including on the composition of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau. Negotiations between Mr. Pereira and Mr. Camará are ongoing. I continue to engage all in active dialogue,

providing ideas and advice when asked. I am confident that they will reach the necessary compromises to enable stability and governance.

While Mr. Pereira is expected to lead PAIGC in the legislative elections, now scheduled for 13 April through a recently issued presidential decree, discussions are still ongoing within the party on whom to support for the presidential elections.

The divisions in the second largest party, the Party for Social Renewal (PRS), have continued and led to the emergence of four presidential candidates among the senior members of the party. While the historic PRS leader and founder, former President Koumba Yalá, publicly declared that he would abandon active politics and decided to endorse Mr. Nuno Na Bian, Director of Civil Aviation in the country, for the presidential elections, the party itself nominated Mr. Abel Incada, a known businessman and Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce, as its official presidential candidate. Opposing the party's decision, two senior members declared themselves independent candidates as well.

The mushrooming of independent candidates is symptomatic of the fragmented nature of politics in the country, further compounded by the crisis since the coup on 12 April 2012. So far, there are 12 candidates, eight independent and four from the political parties, still excluding PAIGC, all running for the presidency. A presidential decree, issued yesterday, shortens the legal timelines to allow for the election on 13 April and provides the date of 5 March as the deadline for candidates to submit applications to the Supreme Court to run in the presidential and parliamentary elections.

The Supreme Court says that it needs about 12 days to properly scrutinize the list of candidates. Some 40 political parties are expected to contest the parliamentary elections. However, on the basis of the existing electronic data system, donated and set up by Timorese electoral and information technology specialists, the Supreme Court may be able to scrutinize the list of candidates in about five days.

As I have mentioned, following a consultation process with stakeholders, in particular the national political actors, as well as international partners, Transitional President Nhamadjo formally announced, on 21 February, that the legislative and presidential elections would finally be held on 13 April. That adjustment was justified in order to enable the conclusion of the pioneering information technology-based voters' registration process throughout the country, while political will was also being secured. If all runs smoothly, the electoral process could therefore be concluded before discussions on the renewal of the mandate of UNIOGBIS are held by the Security Council in May.

The Government declared the end of the voter registration process on 10 February. The 15-day period for the exhibition and correction of the provisional voter lists started on 18 February and is ongoing. It is expected that the final voters list will be ready by the end of next week. The provisional figures indicate that more than 770,000 voters have been registered. That is at least 95 per cent of the estimated potential of the voting population of 810,961. That is indeed a surprising, impressive record.

The National Electoral Commission, with technical support from an international expert team hired through UNDP, has been gearing up to ensure that all logistics are in place to conduct elections operations. The first batch of election materials was delivered on 12 February. A civic education outreach campaign will also be conducted. I would like to commend all donors to the electoral process, especially Timor-Leste, the Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS) and Nigeria, and those who have contributed to the UNDP-managed basket fund in support of the activities run by the National Electoral Commission, notably the European Union, for their generosity.

The voter registration has been an undeniable success. Timor-Leste, Nigeria and ECOWAS must be commended for their support and provision of critical equipment for that essential step, enabling the electoral process and the restoration of constitutional order. Timor-Leste allocated $6 million and deployed more than 20 Timorese election advisers and information technology specialists, all working round the clock in a very challenging environment. So far, ECOWAS has disbursed $5.6 million. Nigeria has provided well over $2 million in support of the activities and needs of the technical electoral support office.

A national plan for electoral security is being implemented, operationally supported by UNIOGBIS and the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Bissau, with the establishment of national joint command structures to be led by the police. The military are to assume a reserved role. In that framework, a successful training of 60 national and

international senior police and military officers was conducted on 14 February, at the National Defence Institute, supported by UNIOGBIS. Furthermore, about 1,500 national police and military are expected to be trained in the next few weeks, in a partnership between UNIOGBIS and Brazil. UNIOGBIS will also gradually strengthen its presence in the regions during the elections.

While we are mindful that intra-party issues are still being worked out, which is to be expected in such kind of scenarios, the technical conditions for elections are in place and no further delays should be considered. Elections are to finally be held no later than 13 April and no further excuses should be accepted at all. The Council's express support in that regard would be highly appreciated.

Each day that passes affects the economy and the livelihoods of the people. The mission of the International Monetary Fund to Bissau earlier this month noted that the economy was still strongly affected by the economic and political consequences of the April 2012 coup and had not recovered. The economy is likely to have grown by only 0.3 per cent in 2013. Civil servants are currently owed at least three months' salary, and in many families they are the single source of income. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated, despite direct support to the population by international partners through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

I urge all stakeholders to play their part in ensuring a meaningful election in a climate of peace and security. Citizens must be able to fully exercise all their rights, including the right to freedom of expression and assembly. At the same time, all political parties and their supporters must play their part in ensuring a climate of peace and security. The media must engage in fair, equitable and unbiased reporting.

The defence forces and security institutions must act within the limits of their roles, as defined in the Constitution and specific laws, and refrain from any interference and intimidation. They should also ensure the security of State institutions, including the ones involved in the electoral process, as well as the security of all candidates.

While mindful of the record of rule of might in the country and the series of incidents reported, I have no concrete reason thus far to state that the defence forces and security institutions will interfere with the process as the elections approach. We will continue to be vigilant, while seeking the Council's express support in that regard.

Similarly, I believe that the political parties and candidates, as well as their supporters, will show the utmost discipline and fully respect the verdict of the people and the elections' results to be announced by the Supreme Court which, as the Council knows is the final arbiter in the event of electoral complaints and also declares the final results. I recommend that the Security Council consider a robust and prompt response, including targeted sanctions, to any attempt to undermine the electoral process and post-electoral stability.

It is with regret that I note the inability of the authorities to follow up the investigations into human rights abuses and serious crimes, such as the beating of the Minister of Transport and Communication on 5 November 2013. It is also a matter of concern that no conclusive judicial action has been taken on either the violation of the integrity of the Nigerian Embassy, on 8 October, or with regard to the case of the abusive onboarding of alleged Syrian citizens who ended up traveling on fake Turkish service passports to Portugal, despite an inquiry that has been completed.

While I commend international partners for their generous contributions, which have made the prospect of elections and the return to constitutional order possible, I would urge them to look beyond the horizon to the post-electoral transition. The newly elected Government will face enormous challenges, and it is paramount that international partners stand ready to resume engagement with the country from day one following the installation of the new, democratically elected authorities. That specifically means providing emergency assistance and support to critical reforms, prior to a pledging conference, which will comprehensively address the overall State-building and development needs of the country.

Fast-tracking reforms in the defence and security sectors, including the urgent modernization of the armed forces, thus fostering civilian oversight, is paramount for stability and democratic governance in Guinea-Bissau. The demobilization and reintegration strategies need to be supported immediately after the elections, along with community-oriented internal security reforms and support to the independence of the judiciary in order to fight impunity, as well as

combating all forms of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

Decades of neglect and instability in Guinea-Bissau have made its institutions ineffective, corroded by corruption and porous to military might. In the post-election period there is a need to start rebuilding the State institutions. A programmatic response is the Government's efficacy amelioration programme. My staff and I have provided our national and international partners with an executive summary of what I believe the international community role should be in assisting Guinea-Bissau on the path of reform, modernization and sustainable development, following the elections.

The temporary co-location of qualified international advisers with co-executive powers in the critical structures of decision-making within the civil service is essential for enduring stability, democratic governance and the development of the country, as it will allow for the confidence of international partners to be gained.

While the reform and modernization of the armed forces and security institutions should remain a key priority for the democratically elected authorities following the general elections, it will also be important to rebuild the other State institutions, notably the judiciary and public administration in general.

I hope that multilateral and regional bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the European Union, United Nations agencies and regional and bilateral partners, will seriously consider the draft strategy now being made available, and promptly begin consultations so as to agree on how best to assist Guinea-Bissau and its legitimate authorities in moving forward with no further ado.

I would propose that a presidential statement reinforcing those key considerations would help our work in the field throughout the ongoing electoral process and beyond.

Finally, I would like to offer some words of gratitude to the staff of the United Nations, both at Headquarters and in the field, and the other international partners working with us in Guinea-Bissau, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, who have always shown great professionalism and dedication.

Madam President, you and all other Council members, as well as the Secretary-General, are always in my prayers. I beg the Almighty and Merciful to continue to bestow on them all endless wisdom as they try to bring peace to our troubled world. May our God bless us all.

The President: I thank Mr. Ramos-Horta for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Patriota.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I thank you for convening this meeting, Madam President, and for the invitation to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, for his briefing and his outstanding leadership at this very crucial moment of Guinea-Bissau's history.

As has been mentioned, I accepted the invitation from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to visit the country late last month. I take this opportunity to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, all personnel of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau and the Peacebuilding Support Office for their support to the visit. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins for joining me, in a demonstration of her ongoing commitment.

During my four-day visit to Bissau, I spoke with a wide spectrum of interlocutors, including transitional authorities, political actors, civil servants, civil society organizations and international partners. In each of those meetings, I stressed that free and transparent elections and a return to constitutional order were essential for the full resumption of much-needed international cooperation.

I found a country in serious economic distress, in spite of its human and material resources and potential. The consequences of the 2012 coup hit the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest, and do not seem to have affected its perpetrators in significant ways. It seems that an urgent reflection on the part of the international community is needed to avoid such twisted consequences.

In contacts with international partners I was able to identify a scenario of improved regional and subregional coordination. A positive regional context is a key factor

for stability in Guinea-Bissau. I will continue to work for such positive trends to gain even more traction.

In meetings with various transitional authorities, including in the military, I could observe the very complex realities related to the modernization of the security and defence sectors. While there seems to be a national consensus on the urgency of, and even the main modalities for, the modernization of the security sector, simplistic notions about the role of the military in politics, with little consideration of civil-military relations and the conduct of political elites, are of limited practical assistance.

A more comprehensive approach is necessary. Meaningful modernization entails an adequate understanding of the underlying historical and sociological factors contributing to political instability since independence, and also since the conflict of 1998. It will require sustained support to political dialogue, State reform and the modernization of key State structures, from the police and the judiciary to public administration and services.

Any effective process will have to ensure that no social group or stakeholder be — nor perceive itself as being — relegated to second-class citizenship, and that the various contributions to the process of institutional progress be recognized in a plural and democratic national environment with equal opportunity for all.

International coordination among key actors supporting security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau will remain important. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is positioned to play a central role, including through the strengthened presence of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau. The international community should be ready to rally behind the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's lead and support efforts decisively and swiftly.

I was impressed by the willingness of key regional and international partners in Bissau, such as ECOWAS and the European Union, to heed that call. Following the elections, my own country, Brazil, will reassess the prospects for resumed cooperation in that field.

International crime and drug-trafficking remain major concerns among international interlocutors, in spite of assessments pointing to a relative decline. The issue of irregular fishing and logging licenses was raised by national interlocutors as an emerging challenge. Institutional constraints, the political situation and the lack of law-enforcement resources remain significant obstacles. A focus on increasing transparent revenue-collection and strengthening local capacities to promote social and economic development stands a good chance of garnering support.

I am all the more convinced that impunity in Guinea-Bissau is a result of persistent political instability, weak institutions and unresolved hurdles in civil-military relations. An integrated approach capable of reinforcing national ownership of a renewed commitment to democracy and a more inclusive society will yield the best results.

While in Bissau, I could testify to Timor-Leste's invaluable contribution in support of the voter-registration process. The importance of the registration process transcends the upcoming elections. It enables the exercise of civil and political rights, but can also serve planning and policy-making purposes. I commend the people of Guinea-Bissau for the enthusiasm with which they participated in the registration process, which allowed for a historical expansion of the electorate throughout the country. The next elections therefore have the potential to be the most significant step for the consolidation of democracy in Guinea-Bissau's history.

In the light of the extension of voter registration, the resulting rescheduling of elections does not necessarily imply a lack of commitment. The technical quality of elections, for which the registration process is key, is just as important.

I welcome the election of a new leader of Guinea-Bissau's major party, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde. The nomination of candidates by various parties and the success of the registration process in difficult conditions can help to generate positive dynamics for the restoration of democracy, in spite of the many challenges ahead.

I fully concur with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's call on all political actors to overcome their political divides, move to the next phase and march peacefully and decisively to a new chapter in the country's political life without further delay — a new chapter that is possible and in which I believe the PBC can play a constructive strategic role.

On the economic front, the impact of political instability on the economy is devastating. Public

finances are in a very poor state. The withdrawal of international assistance has had a direct impact on public services and economic activity.

Food insecurity in fertile Guinea-Bissau is a glaring contradiction. Dependency on the cashew nut was pointed out as a major challenge. As stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/105), nearly half of the population relies on cashew nut sales for their primary income. Alternatives aimed at diversifying the economy range from processing cashew nuts, stimulating the production of other crops, including rice, cassava and beans, and promoting fishery, to investments in the mining and tourism sectors. The logistics services sector can play an important role, with the planned construction of a deep-water port in Buba, where natural conditions are favourable.

In the absence of legitimate authorities, I was not able to discuss strategic, long-term peacebuilding priorities with national decision makers. Nevertheless, I would like to present some conclusions that may help provide a strategy for our collective engagement with Guinea-Bissau and measure progress in the peacebuilding agenda, including with a view to engaging with legitimate authorities in future.

First, Guinea-Bissau's international partners, especially those in the region, have a decisive role to play in fostering stability. For that contribution to materialize in the most effective way, strong political coordination is central. That is one clear area for the immediate engagement of the PBC.

Secondly, I wish to highlight the vision of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ramos-Horta of intensive international support to a State-rebuilding programme following the elections. The Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC can play an important role in supporting the Special Representative's vision.

Thirdly, I would like to propose for further discussion three achievable, modest, medium-term strategic objectives in the institutional, socioeconomic and security areas, which can guide the PBC in its resumed engagement and also contribute to the Council's subsequent deliberations.

On the institutional track, one objective is the completion of a full democratic cycle with a constitutional transfer of power to elected officials. Apart from the strong international political engagement, in which the PBC finds a natural place, that can be supported by technical cooperation in public administration, aligned with the Special Representative's proposals, and support to political dialogue, including through social communication. Let me highlight, in that regard, the importance of sustained engagement by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, including in making technical expertise available. The Security Council plays a key role in that regard by helping ensure that electoral results are respected and continuing to monitor closely the post-electoral political developments.

On the social and economic track, one objective is to make significant strides on social and economic indicators, with a focus on food security and rural development. The World Food Programme should be able to envisage its departure from Guinea-Bissau. Responsible economic diversification is key. The economic empowerment of women, who are responsible for more than 80 per cent of the workforce in cashew nut harvesting, is an essential dimension. Moreover, I was impressed by women's organizations in Guinea-Bissau and the way they bring together different ethnicities, religious denominations and political affiliations under the common objective of economic empowerment. They are obviously an important driving force for peacebuilding efforts.

On the security sector track, an objective is to provide a platform for coordination and strategizing on the international support to the modernization of the security sector. The Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC can help bring key actors together, deepen the understanding of the political and social dynamics in play and assess the need for comprehensive mechanisms of support to the reintegration of retired military personnel, along with political civil-military dialogue and reconciliation.

Once again, and especially after visiting the country, let me stress that, in contrast with the current crisis, Guinea-Bissau has clear potential as a stable and prosperous nation. With modest resources invested in national capacities, a great deal can be achieved. I was struck by the conversations I had with deeply committed, highly educated officials, dynamic civil society organizations and wise cultural and religious leaders. A pluralistic, peaceful and vibrant society is ready to fully emerge from decades of poverty and instability and deserves our active solidarity.

The President: I thank Ambassador Patriota for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on behalf of my country, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month and assure you of my country's full cooperation and support. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General José Ramos-Horta for his detailed briefing and encourage him to continue his efforts to enable the country to return to constitutional order and thus deal with the major challenges before us in terms of my country's stabilization and development. Those are goals to which the people of Guinea-Bissau aspire. I also welcome the statements by Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil and President of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, and the statement to be made by Ambassador António Gumende, Permanent Representative of Mozambique and representative of the Executive Secretariat of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). I would like to pay tribute to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) through Ambassador Youssoufou Bamba, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire and current Chairman of ECOWAS, for his tireless support to my country throughout this transition process.

I welcome the appointment of Mr. Carlos Moura of Brazil as Special Representative of the CPLP for Guinea-Bissau, and we are very pleased that the coordination between international organizations, in particular ECOWAS and the CPLP, is being increasingly strengthened on the ground.

Since the last coup in Guinea-Bissau, on 12 April 2012, we have been fully aware that the path that will lead us to the restoration of constitutional order will not only be long, but also entail huge sacrifices from the people of Guinea-Bissau, especially the most vulnerable segments of society, namely, young people and women. That is due to the fact that our country depends heavily on the help of its partners, and our major partners have suspended or reduced their cooperation with our country.

Today, at the end of the long journey that plunged the country into significant political, economic and social crisis, we are driven by our strong belief that this is the final phase of the transition period. That period will end, of course, with the realization of the most important recommendation of resolution 2048 (2012), which is the restoration of constitutional order.

After consultations with all the political parties and other national actors, the President decreed that presidential and legislative elections would be held on 13 April 2014, thus confirming the postponement of the elections, which were originally scheduled for 16 March 2014.

This new development in no way reflects a lack of political will on the part of the authorities of the country, but rather is motivated by objective conditions that were not met within the desired time frame. For example, in order be able to identify the largest number of voters possible, and given the logistical difficulties encountered during that process, the electoral census lasted a little over two months instead of 21 days as originally planned, thus missing certain legal deadlines stipulated in Guinea-Bissau's electoral code.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that almost 95 per cent of voters were counted by the census, including the country's diaspora, who, for the first time, will be able to participate in the upcoming election of their leaders. We should note that the electoral registry has never before included such an impressive number of voters.

In that respect, I would like to thank all our partners who, despite the sometimes emergency circumstances in which they were called to intervene, have, through their contributions, enabled this process to be successful. We hope to be able to count on their support during the post-election period. In that connection, I must highlight the examples of solidarity and cooperation received from the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Timor-Leste, ECOWAS, the African Union and the European Union, among others. We believe that, at the end of this transition process, our cooperative relations with our traditional partners, including Angola, Portugal, Brazil and others, will be further strengthened, thus allowing for a full resumption of our friendly relations based on solidarity.

The elections to be held next April will be a first step in the major challenge that our country faces in the coming years.

Along with the urgent need for the reform and modernization of our defence and security forces, which, incidentally, remains at the top of our priorities, Guinea-Bissau needs close support from the

international community so as to undertake a massive reform of the public administration and establish the essential conditions for the promotion of justice in order to combat impunity, which unfortunately still prevails in our society.

The country's social stability will largely depend, among other things, on the future that we provide for young people and women. In spite of their vulnerability, those two groups represent potentially profitable sectors in the economy if we create for them a climate conducive to their professional development.

The issue of drug trafficking remains another challenge to overcome. My country remains committed to continuing its efforts to eradicate that scourge. However, given the great fragility of our security and justice institutions, among others, as well as the transnational dimension of the phenomenon, regional and international cooperation must be strengthened. Guinea-Bissau is open to all types of cooperation in that field so as to be able to combat that evil.

In that context, we fully support the recommendations of the Secretary-General in its latest report on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2014/105), according to which the post-election phase should merit special support from the international community in order to build a lasting foundation for our development and stability.

In conclusion, allow me once again to reiterate my country's deep gratitude to the members of the Council and our partners, who have always stood by us throughout this difficult transition stage.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mozambique.

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique): I would like to begin by extending my warm congratulations to you, Madam President, on the accession of your country to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February, and to thank you for inviting me to participate and deliver this statement on behalf the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) in this briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, a member of our Community.

The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries welcomes the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/105) on the current status of the process leading to the full restoration of constitutional order in that country and the valuable and insightful information provided by His Excellency Mr. Antonio Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, gathered during his recent visit to Bissau, as well as the statement by the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The briefings provided on the latest developments in the country, which the CPLP has been following with keen interest, convey a mixed picture of encouraging progress coupled with the persistence of areas of concern, to which all stakeholders should continue to pay particular attention.

The successful conclusion of the voter registration process and the adoption of a national electoral security plan for 2014 — arrangements aimed at ensuring the holding of credible, inclusive, peaceful, free and fair legislative and presidential elections — constitute a positive development, of which we should take note.

We welcome the preparations by all political parties to participate in the elections, which can be seen as a demonstration of a renewed commitment of those national political actors to the irreversibility of the process of restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

We recognize that such positive developments are in no small measure thanks to the support of the international community for the people of Guinea-Bissau in their endeavours to find a lasting solution to the political crisis precipitated by the coup d'état of April 2012.

We would like to commend the tireless efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, who has done a remarkable job in rebuilding the trust and encouraging sobriety among all stakeholders by managing with zeal, patience and dexterity the numerous and intricate issues that arise in a stabilization process of that nature in a balanced fashion.

Although under the prevailing circumstances one might suppose that a delay in the elections may be reasonable, we must note that we are facing the third successive postponement. That is particularly worrying in a country where the people have been exposed and subjected to all types of suffering and traumas since the onset of the current political crisis two years ago. The international community must continue to impress

upon the current authorities the urgency of holding free, fair and inclusive elections on the new date of 13 April.

Similarly, the recurrent reports of episodes of intimidation, the violation of human rights, the lack of concrete actions to fight impunity and restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and assembly, which create a persisting climate of insecurity, are a cause of concern. Those aspects were plainly visible in the beating of the Minister of Transportation and Communications last November or the serious incident of the forced boarding of passengers with forged documentation on a Bissau-Lisbon Air Portugal flight in December.

The economic and humanitarian situation has deteriorated substantially, posing a threat to the stabilization process on the eve of the elections. The strikes that are taking place over the non-payment of salaries in various economic and social sectors amply demonstrate the underlying seriousness of the situation.

A lasting solution to such problems, among others, requires the continued strong commitment of national stakeholders to the cause of the political stabilization and greater involvement of the international community in supporting the future democratically elected authorities. We must mobilize our efforts to provide to those authorities, if they so require and in cooperation with other regional and international organizations, the security conditions to allow them to implement the necessary reforms in the country that will once and for all pull Guinea-Bissau out of the vicious cycle of recurrent instability.

As part of the long-standing commitment to the Bissau-Guinean people, the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries in January appointed Ambassador Carlos Moura as its Special Representative to Guinea-Bissau. Ambassador Moura has the responsibility to monitor developments and to cooperate with all stakeholders, whenever necessary, until the completion of the electoral process. His deployment represents a concrete, albeit modest, contribution by the CPLP to the efforts of the international community and conveys our sense of permanent solidarity with the people of Guinea-Bissau.

Let me conclude by once again calling upon the international community to continue supporting the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau and to begin preparations to support the future legitimate authorities immediately after their election in the medium- to long-term perspective. The holding of a free, fair, inclusive and credible election, the implementation of its results and the submission of the military to the civilian authorities are the conditions required for the return to constitutional order, in line with the relevant resolutions adopted by this body, in collaboration with the African Union and other international stakeholders.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 15 States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). I welcome the excellent report by the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, contained in document S/2014/105, dated 14 February 2014.

First of all, as this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor in the month of February, allow me, Madam President, to convey my delegation's warm congratulations on Lithuania's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this moth.

I would like to thank His Excellency Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his excellent briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and, above all, for his leadership in managing the crisis in that country. I should likewise like to thank all those who spoke before me — Ambassador Patriota, Ambassador Da Gama and Ambassador Gumende, on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. The Economic Community of West African States shares their view that, since the holding of the Council's previous meeting on Guinea-Bissau (see S/PV.7070), the political situation in the country has continued to be marked by the uncertainty generated by the reluctance on the part of the leadership of the Transitional Government to carry out general elections to mark the end of the transition, in line with the decision taken by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.

The Transitional Government has justified its inability to meet the transition calendar for a number of reasons. They include a lack of funds to compile electoral and voter registration lists and the issue of district boundaries, which they claim impeded the holding of the elections under optimal conditions by the set date of 24 November 2013. That environment has been aggravated by the interaction among political

actors that led to the breakdown of consensus on the timing of the transition.

Nevertheless, ECOWAS States members, working in close cooperation with the West African Economic and Monetary Union and other members of the international community, were able to secure the necessary funding for the proper conduct of elections. The process of fundraising was concluded in December 2013, which required the extension of the transition period by the National People's Assembly, following extensive consultations among the main political actors. That extension was subsequently endorsed by the transitional authorities and communicated to the Chairman of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government in December 2013. It is for that reason that the date of 16 March 2014 that has been set for the holding of the elections does not seem realistic. I should point out that this is the second time that the deadline for a return to constitutional order has been moved.

General elections are now being proposed for 13 April 2014. In that regard, it should be recalled that voter registration was completed on 8 February, and the voters' list will be available on 4 March. However, according to the Constitution, the elections should take place two months after the publication of the voter list. In addition, two key domestic issues continue unresolved, and they should be addressed urgently in order to avoid derailing the electoral process.

First, according to news reports and sources close to committed members of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC), the former Prime Minister has returned to Bissau. Such rumors fuel the palpable unease among the population, certain political circles and the military level, which suggests that his safety cannot be guaranteed.

Secondly, we note that the PAIGC neither held its congress nor appointed a presidential candidate before the end of the period set by the National Electoral Commission. Moreover, some members of the Transitional Government have indicated interest in standing as presidential candidates.

Given those circumstances, and because of the slow pace of the efforts under way to hold the elections, it is clear that more time is needed for the transitional authorities to conduct truly credible and transparent elections. In any event, I would suggest that ECOWAS provide technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission and the directorate-general for technical support to the electoral process office, within the Ministry of Administration of Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, an ECOWAS technical team has provided assistance in organizing meetings with key stakeholders, setting up a timetable, revising the budget for the elections, supervising registration activities and training regional staff of the Electoral Commission. In addition, the team has contributed to greater coordination, collaboration and synergy between the National Commission and the directorate, including organizing technical coordination meetings to exchange ideas on improving the electoral process in the country.

I would like to point out that ECOWAS also provides assistance to Guinea-Bissau in the context of reform of the security and defence sectors. The ECOWAS team on that front, made up of a coordinator and six other experts, was deployed in Guinea-Bissau at the end of December 2013. The team has both short- and long-term objectives that are aimed at modernizing the defence and security sectors by improving the legal framework and through capacity-building with regard to human and material resources.

With regard to the status of defence and security-sector reform, a completion rate of 18 per cent with respect to the rehabilitation of selected barracks has been achieved. Discussions are continuing on the implementation of a pension scheme and a stipend for veterans and retirees. Training needs have been identified, with training having been provided at ECOWAS training centres of excellence on the basis of the needs of the restructured armed forces of Guinea-Bissau.

I would also like to point out that ECOWAS is committed to supporting Guinea-Bissau to ensure security for the upcoming elections. In that regard, the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) held coordination meetings on the issue of security with the Chairman and Commissioners of the National Electoral Commission, alongside other security agencies.

In addition, in cooperation with local authorities and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, ECOMIB is supporting local authorities to ensure the security of election materials and escort election materials from the central warehouse to the various regions and sectors, in collaboration with the National Electoral Commission, the United Nations

Development Programme and local security agencies. ECOMIB is also helping to generate mobile emergency teams to intervene in polling stations where individuals or groups of individuals attempt to interfere with the proper conduct of elections. It is also helping to ensure the safety of election observers from ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations and other agencies that request it, without prejudice to the responsibility of the authorities of Guinea-Bissau. ECOMIB is working to deploy sectoral mobile teams to report in real time — every 30 minutes — on the situation on the ground at their respective locations so as to provide alerts on any incident that could disturb public order or threaten the success of the elections. It is also helping to identify and arrest individuals or groups who plan or attempt to disrupt the elections, so as to transfer such individuals to the nearest police station or National Guard office.

I want to conclude by inviting the international community to join their efforts with those of ECOWAS in order to help Guinea-Bissau to hold, in the best of conditions, free, fair, transparent and credible elections so as to enable the country to finally experience stability and lasting peace.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.